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**EMPTY PACKAGE DETECTOR FOR LABELING APPARATUS**

**Abstract**

A method and apparatus for communicating with a multiple lane labeling machine such that the labeling machine will only dispense and place labels on packaged articles. The present invention comprises a labeling machine having sensors positioned in front of the label transport, which positions the labels on the packaged articles. These sensors are preferably positioned directly in front of the label transport over the row of articles preceding the transporter and operate to detect the presence and absence of packaged articles and their content. Thus, if a package is absent from a row or does not contain product the sensors alert the labeling machine of the absence of an article so that the labeler does not dispense a label for a missing article or empty package.

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